



Testimony of

**Melodie Peters, President**

AFT Connecticut

Public Health Committee  
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***HB 5536 An Act Concerning Continuing Education Requirements for Psychologists***

Good afternoon Senator Gerratana, Representative Johnson and members of the Public Health Committee. My name is Melodie Peters and I am the President of AFT Connecticut, a diverse union of nearly 29,000 members, including more than 7,000 caregivers who work in all kinds of healthcare settings across the state, including hospitals; patient homes; and public schools. It is on behalf of our school psychologists that I submit this testimony today on HB 5536 An Act Concerning Continuing Education Requirements for Psychologists.

As a union of licensed and certified professionals who enjoy the public trust, we believe in lifelong learning. Continuing education is essential for improving professional competence, keeping abreast of new technology and practices and complying with new regulatory requirements. Our members can best serve their students and patients when they have honed their skills through experience and professional development.

A school psychologist must hold an educator certificate from the State Department of Education. As certified school employees, psychologists are evaluated each year on their performance and must receive no fewer than eighteen hours of professional development each school year. Section 10-148(c) of the general statutes requires those professional development activities to be (1) planned in response to identified needs, (2) provided by qualified instructional personnel, as appropriate, (3) have the requirements for participation in the activity shared with participants before the commencement of the activity, (4) are evaluated in terms of its effectiveness and its contribution to the attainment of school or district-wide goals, and (5) are documented in accordance with procedures established by the State Board of Education.

Section 1(d) of HB 5536 allows a licensee who holds a **professional** educator certificate to substitute the professional development activities mentioned above for the 10 hours of continuing education required by this bill. We support the exemption for professional educator certificate holders, but ***ask this committee to exempt all certified school psychologists, including those who may hold an initial certificate.*** Those new to the role of school psychologist hold initial certificates for the first five years of their practice. They still must however, complete the same 18 hours of professional development that professional certificate holders do. ***There is no reason not to exempt all certified school psychologists from the 10-hour requirement established by HB 5536.***

With that change, we would be happy to support HB 5536.